

Earth Day Activities Celebrate Redstone's Natural and Cultural Resources

Since 1995, Redstone Arsenal has hosted an annual celebration of Mother Earth at the Path to Nature, Redstone's wetland education center. Every year more than 150 school children join Garrison personnel for a day of educational programs about wildlife, wetlands, and Native American culture. This year's ceremony was kicked off by Garrison Commander Robert Devlin and the Mayor of Huntsville, Loretta Spencer. The celebration included the presentation of the 2nd annual environmental awards and a tree planting. Students from Monte Sano Elementary and Priceville Elementary were treated to an eco-savenger hunt, a wetland tour and educational presentations.



Among the presenters for 2004 were representatives from the North Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitators (NAWR) who talked to the youngsters about handling injured wildlife. "It's great for us to talk to school groups about what to do with injured or abandoned animals, because it's the kids who usually find them" said Michelle Novosel of NAWR. As part of their presentation, NAWR brought several baby animals which they are currently raising. The students had the opportunity to pet and even hold baby opossums. NAWR also brought a baby raccoon and their latest addition, a two week old coyote pup! NAWR raises and/or rehabilitates the animals until they are able to care for themselves and then releases them back into the wild.

Other highlights of 2004 included a visit from Daphne Moland, a ranger from Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge and Jeff Thompson, an archaeologist and flint knapper from Alexander Archaeological Consultants. Past presenters have included representatives



from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Alabama Geological Survey, Huntsville's Indian Education Program, Alabama Forestry Commission, Madison County's Operation Green Team, The Land Trust of Huntsville and North Alabama, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. The celebration has always included local private and public schools, home schooled children, and the Redstone community.